

My postdoctoral stay at Margarita Salas' laboratory

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My stay at Margarita Salas' laboratory, between 1983 and 1984, began shortly after I finished my thesis at the CIB with Rubén López, and was my first postdoctoral experience. Although I was there less than 1 year, my time there was enriching in every aspect thanks to the personal touch that Margarita lent to all her activities.

From a scientific point of view, there was a constant requirement to be consistently up-to-date on one's specific line of work: we had to examine newly published articles in order to stay familiar with the work of other groups and to be aware of progress made by scientific rivals working in common areas. Margarita encouraged daily discussion of these topics, either personally with each member of the laboratory, or as a group during our frequent seminars. This created an environment in which there was a great demand to "measure up" to the scientific level that Margarita maintained throughout her life.

In addition to Margarita the scientist, the best known and most recognized by everyone, there was the less well known personal side of Margarita. This aspect of her character was evident whenever you met her at any meeting, conference, or event. She was always affectionate, interested in the progress in your laboratory, the struggle to obtain more funding, and mentioning, frustrated,

the lack of common sense among politicians, who didn't (and still don't) prioritize science. She was always acutely aware of the day-to-day problems we faced and her constant encouragement gave us the strength to continue fighting and improving. This side of her character was evident in her handling of a Ministry of Science-funded project that began in 1985 and was co-led by Margarita and Rubén; throughout the course of the project her spirit and leadership guided us all.

More recently, researchers throughout Spain with a shared interest in the study of phages, albeit from very different perspectives, once again witnessed Margarita's dedication through her participation in the FAGOMA network. This group of "phagologists" has already held five meetings. Margarita participated in all of them, either in person or, if this was not possible, by providing interesting contributions describing her recent findings about the enzymes encoded by *Bacillus subtilis* phages. My last personal encounter with her was just before the summer at the Centro Nacional de Biotecnología (National Center of Biotechnology; CNB-CSIC), in the context of a project that involved several colleagues and to which she had many ideas to contribute. As always, and until the end, she was in the thick of it.

All that is left for me to say is, with the deepest affection, "goodbye Margarita and thank you for the lasting example you have set".

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Subunit Composition of *B. subtilis* RNA Polymerase

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